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TITLE 250 - DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 40 – DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE MARKETING

SUBCHAPTER 10 - NURSERY AND PLANT HEALTH

PART 3- Rules and Regulations for Out-of-State Honey Bee Quarantine to Prevent Entry of Varroa Mite (*Varroa Jacobsoni*) into Rhode Island

3.1 Purpose

To regulate the transport and shipment of live honey bees into and through the State of Rhode Island for the purpose of preventing the introduction of this destructive pest into the State.

3.2 Authority

These regulations are promulgated pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapters 42-17.1 and 4-12, and in accordance with the procedures set forth in the R.I. Administrative Procedures Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35.

3.3 Applicability

The terms and provisions of these rules and regulations shall be liberally construed to permit the Department to effectuate the purpose of state law and policies for the importation of live honey bees.

3.4 Definitions

- A. "Brood comb" means wax comb produced by the worker bees in a hive for the purpose of giving a place where the queen can lay her eggs and the larvae and pupae may develop.
- B. "Caged queen honey bees" means a queen honey bee that has been placed in a receptacle suitable for shipment by common carrier.
- C. "Hives" means any man-made domicile with removable frames for housing honey bees.
- D. "Nucleus" means a group of honey bees containing a queen bee and any number of worker bees.
- E. "Nurse bees" means the worker honey bees normally included with the caged queen honey bee when a nucleus is being shipped.

- F. "Packaged honey bees" means a group of worker honey bees packaged for shipment to beekeepers in other areas. Usually sold by the pound in from one pound to five pound packages.
- G. "Varroa mite" means a parasitic mite of honeybees, (*Varroa jacobsoni*) which has been introduced into the U.S. after being brought into this country from its' native Asia. While it is nearly invisible to the eye it is one of the larger mites. This mite feeds on the hemolymph (or blood) directly through the body wall of the adult, developing larvae and pupae in the hive causing high mortality. The mite spreads rapidly via movement of colonies during commercial pollination, import of queens and package bees, and bees, and by drifting and robbing worker bees and drones.

3.5 Pursuant to this Quarantine

- A. No honey bees in hives, nuclei or brood comb, including domestic bees that have been transported across state lines for pollination services or honey production, may be imported into Rhode Island from outside the State unless proper steps have been followed to insure against the introduction of Varroa Mites.
- B. Caged queen honey bees with nurse bees and packaged honey bees may be imported into Rhode Island from outside the State provided the following conditions are met:
 - 1. Before the honey bees are imported into the state the supplier must notify the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture of the number of cages and the packages that will be shipped and their destination.
 - 2. Prior to shipment, the cage(s) containing queen honey bees and nurse bees must each be treated with an effective control material in accordance with labeled directions for Varroa Mite control, including dosage and exposure time.
 - 3. The cages and packages must be protected from reinfestation and shipped within 48 hours following treatment.
 - 4. The cages and packages must each be accompanied by a certificate, issued by a duly appointed regulatory official from the State, District, Province or Territory of origin, verifying that the treatment has been applied.
 - 5. Upon each shipment, the supplier must send a copy of the certificate to the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture.
- C. Any apiary equipment which does not contain live honey bees, including live brood, and which has been vacant of live honey bees for fifteen (15) days or longer will be allowed to enter the State, provided the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture is notified in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 4-12.

- D. Similarly, honey bees in hives may be transported through Rhode Island only under the following conditions:
1. Hives must be securely enclosed at all times.
 2. Vehicles transporting bees must remain within one mile of the highway of interstate travel.
 3. The vehicle operator or other responsible person must report immediately to the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture any release of bees, whether accidental or intentional.
 4. Prior to transport, each hive must be treated with an effective control material in accordance with the labeled directions for control of Varroa mite in honey beehives.
 5. Following treatment with a properly labeled and effective control material, the hives must be protected from reinfestation and promptly transported.
 6. Hives must be accompanied by a certificate, issued by the State, District, Province or Territory of origin verifying that the treatment has been applied.
 7. All honey bees and beehive transported through Rhode Island must be completely free of Varroa mites.
 8. Hive transporters must notify the Division of Agriculture in writing within one work day prior to shipment through Rhode Island.

3.6 Violations

Any honey bees, used beekeeping equipment or any other regulated articles moved, shipped, or transplanted in violation of this quarantine shall be or otherwise disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the Director as provided in R.I. Gen. Laws § 4-12-10.